

TESTIMONY FOR RAISED BILL NO. 5666

My name is Gail Bogossian. I live in West Hartford. I'm speaking to you today to express my strong support for Bill # 5666, the bill that will expand the Pilot Program giving services to adults with autism spectrum disorders. The bill adds 25 adults to the 50 already served, and requires that the adults served be in a geographical area different from the one currently served.

You have no idea what it's like. Or maybe you do – I don't know what your personal situation is. But most of you probably have no idea what it's like. What it's like to have a child, a son, who has so much potential. Who is so smart. So articulate. So loving. So motivated to be something special. To make a real, and significant contribution to this world. Who has so many hopes and dreams about his future. And then to watch him be unsuccessful. Unsuccessful at his attempt to attend college. Unsuccessful at his attempt to get and keep a job. Unsuccessful at his attempts at doing all sorts of simple things that most people do so easily. And for there to be nothing you can do about it.

My son, who has been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome, a form of high-functioning autism, is 20 years old and lives at home. He does not have a job and he cannot live independently. I know this young man could be something great, living independently, with a future in which he is a contributing member of our society, of our State, if he is given the chance. But that chance is not something we, as parents, are capable of giving him, as much as we want to. We don't have the training or expertise or frankly, the time, to teach these children the things they need to learn. What my son, like so many of our young autistic adults, needs is support, from professionals who are properly trained to help adults on the autistic spectrum, to learn financial management, social skills, independent living skills, including driving or using public transportation, organizational skills and scheduling, cooking, help to get and keep a job, job coaching, and handling transitions. If we can get my son and the other young adults on the autism spectrum the support they need, we will all benefit in the long run.

Thank you.

Gail Bogossian
3/12/08